

**NSG's**  
NEWSLETTER

**CAVERNDISH**

**Sept**

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Hi All,

I know you have all been doing heaps, just make sure you keep it up!

Lots out there to do.

Check out the trip list and get out there!

**Trip reports**

**Riwaka Climbing Trips**

**By Michael Brewer:**

13 August 2005.

I know that I can't trust memories of caves that are more than 10 years old. The last time I had been to the end of the Riwaka cave was only 8 years ago and I was sure that I climbed around the canal area with only a thigh deep wetting. Why therefore was I swimming across a deep pool with the only piece of neoprene on my body being my socks? A couple of minutes later Mike McManaway was probably having the same thoughts as he struggled to remain afloat in the same pool and then lost his gumboots

in his attempts to kick himself along. Britta had quite reasonably elected to go back. Steve Holyoake who hadn't believed my memory had brought along a diving buoyancy compensator, despite my criticism, and was now in his element. My only defence is that it had recently rained so maybe the flow was high. Next time .....

This trip was conceived while at a caving meet in South Wales over Easter. Here I met up with Martin Groves (lump) fresh back a very successful diving trip in the Riwaka where he had found large dry passages and had bypassed all the sumps other than 3b. To me this meant that another effort to find a dry way around 3b had to be made.

We climbed out of the water, shook ourselves dry then proceeded to climb or wade our way to just beyond sump 3a without any further wetting incidents. Here we found a rope left behind by Martin Groves 3 years before when he had partly free climbed up a flow area towards a hole in the roof. This was our first destination.

I climbed up the rope then drilled and placed a higher bolt. After a bit of scrambling and scraping pushed my head up into an ever-diminishing draft less crack, I convinced myself that there was no way on. Potential hot lead number one was crossed off the list and unfortunately potential hot lead number two described as a "drafting hole above the big boulder that bridged the passage near the end of the canal" had also been eliminated on the way in by using a spotlight that revealed ..... nothing other than a solid rock roof.

Wandering down the passage about 20m we spied another potential passage in the roof so set about climbing again. After much inefficiency I climbed up and placed one bolt then on placing another one managed to cross thread the bolt. Time was up so we left the ropes in place and wandered out to a dark cold evening.

September 10<sup>th</sup> 2005

Steve and I returned to complete the climb we had started a month before. Mike and Britta had good excuses why they couldn't come but we managed to convince Sarah Brewer and Lynette Holyoake into coming. My memory- ahhh – was not so bad after all. With lower water and skilled boulder hopping a swim was avoided and Sarah even managed to keep her bra dry!

Steve and I displayed much greater bolting efficiency this time. I brought a climbing harness with lots of gear loops on, tape loop ladders to stand in, lots of screwgate carabiners to get rid of the fiddle factor with rapides, generous bolt hangers and a good spanner. I still felt weary with the drill dangling around my neck. If I had a fall I was sure the drill bit would get my spleen! Alas the drill ran out of power after only 3 bolt placements and so I had to scare myself on natural protection then a bit of lead climbing until the roof was reached leaving a traverse across flow with no obvious ways of protecting it.

Down I came and home we went this time getting out in the light.

Lots of gear left behind so a return is planned. Anyone interested in coming?

**Smorge' visitors.**  
**By Andrew Smith:**

Smorge lay sleeping as the three entered the chamber.

The Dragons lair was of enormous dimensions, boulders strewn all over the floor, which rose up to meet the roof a hundred meters above. The dragon had slept since before the early 70's when Greg, Martin, Fred, Van Watson, and friends had first found it.

There was only one way in, in those days but in recent times others had found a small passage from another cave into the heart of Middle Earth's depths.

Middle Earth is a cave with its name take from the J.R.R. Tolken's book "Lord of the Rings".

Greenlink is the other way into Smorge's lair (Smorge's Hall) and it was this route that three intrepid adventurers chose to take.

Entering Greenlink just before elevenses (10.30am) Saturday morning was easy, cave packs bulging with rope and rigging equipment the three pushed inwards.

As always Greenlink is inspiring, with its small passages which curve and twist left right left and right again but always down. Carved out of solid Marble with its white quartz running through veins in the rock. Corkscrewing and spiralling down and ever down the three surged on. The thunder of the waterfalls began to get louder and louder as more and more water entered the system. Abseil after abseil, often the white foaming mass would beat hard on their bodies as they descended.

Progress was slow but never the less always forward, over coming one challenge after another and then they were out of the water. This was the junction of yet another cave.

This one is known as Swissmade. No option to ascend this cave was available, as many ropes would have to have been rigged in advance to gain the surface.

The three continued down. The cave was contorted and twisted, then came the streamway again and with it always the deafening roar of the water as it disappeared over the pitch heads. Ropes rigged in advance guided the three into pools and rifts.

Once they thought they could hear voices but it was just the water gurgling and chortling to it's self. Many hours past and progress was going as expected and it was then that the small party found the horizontal break that they had yearned for. The mostly vertical stream above turned into a calmly flowing easy walking canal.

Splishing and splashing the three made fast and easy progress along this amazing passageway. The floor of gravel and walls of shiny Marble glistened to them as they past. The roof remained a mystery, as their carbide-powered flames did not penetrate the dark spaces above. Slowly the roof came into view. The three knew what this meant! Up ahead waiting and with a silence that was foreboding lay not one but two sumps.

The three enjoyed the streamway for many meters and then there it was. The first sump! An innocent looking pool of water where the stream appeared to end, but this was known to the three not to be the case. The three knew that diving down deep into the frigid water would yield more dry passage beyond.

The water was dark and deep. The pool would have been inviting to summer swimmers on the surface but many hours under ground with steam arising from their clothing, the task ahead indeed encompassed every thought and ate away at their wills to proceed.

The first dive was six meters with a depth of approximately two meters. To achieve this it was a down and up. Once this was done the three knew that the larger of the two lay ahead. As before the water was deep and dark, a beautiful pool with a rock roof disappearing below the waterline. There was no doubt about it this was the way to proceed, no other option was available. One of the three had brought a small air tank to replace the rope. This Rope would be used to guide them through to the air space on the other side of the wet. Eleven meters of under water breath holding was required, but once under, the aqua blue colours and ambience was truly amazing. The pebbles on

the sump floor were highlighted by our light source and contrasted them against the solid rock walls and roof. Towards the end of the eleven meters two fangs of teeth protruded from the ceiling. It was just like swimming out of a fish's mouth. Feelings were intense as each took their turn. Every pull on the dive line that was our propulsion brought each of the three closer to the fangs and then to the delicious air.

The Under water section had been so quite, so still, the visual effects so great that it was almost a shock when once the air surface was gained to hear the roar of the water again. In the space of about two meters the water flow from the sump turned it's self from still quite and serene to a raging mass of white as it plunged it's self over the edge once again to crash in a heap of mist and storm forty five meters below. The trio took time to prepare for they're decent. Packing up equipment and unpacking other, ropes tied and untied and finally the rigging of this the finial abseil. The first of the three descended without a hitch, as did the second. Once all three were below they looked at each other, as they knew that this was the point of non-return. The rope must be pulled down behind them. No going back! The feelings however were not of fear or of uncertainty but of anticipation of what lay ahead. The space at the bottom of the waterfall was eerie with a huge windstorm of water blowing the roar of the water as it purged itself into the rocks and pools at our feet.

The way on took us directly underneath this thundersom mass of cascading water. The small ledge provided little comfort as visibility turned to white and the pounding of the torrent on our heads and shoulders checked our balance.

Moving on in horizontal passage down stream provided easy travel and then there it was! The connection! The connection to Middle Earth.

This passage left the Greenlink streamway and headed left into dry but muddy passage. A tight portion of the route lay in front. Faces washed the water as the roof bumped their helmets. Wriggling, squirming, flames extinguished, pushing packs in front slowly each of the three emerged. Not on this trip had they been subjected to such mud and slither. They had been wet to the skin, pounded apon by hundreds of litres of water, but not humiliated by such thick mud grease. They all had that yuck feeling.

Ahead lay an area of convoluted cave, down climbs lowering packs, up climbs scrambling, hands gripping with void below.

Then there it was, a thin thread like rope that had been placed three weeks earlier by the support crew. The rope dangled there looking very unloved but they were very please to see it.

This was the first of four up ropes that would lead them to the surface and signified the entering into the Middle Earth system. The three made hard work of the accent with wet suits biting into tender body parts and adding another dimension to energy out put. A tightish crawl and there it was, the home of the Dragon! Smorge!

Smorge's Hall was always an overwhelming place, 100 meters to the roof 200 meters from wall to wall.

They ascended a rock fall area that would take them to the second of the four ropes, but alas, that thin 10mm's of nylon was found to be neatly tied and coiled at the top of the small water fall about 15 meters out of reach.

Coiling the rope up and out of the way of the water is some times done to protect the rope from damage.

The support crew from three weeks ago had left the rope down ready for the three to ascend, so may be Smorge the dragon had embarked on a cunning plan to capture three dirty wet cavers.

May be the mystery of the unknown rope coiler will remain exactly that.

Once the realisation of what this meant to the three became apparent, they prepared to make camp and wait the long wait.

Their intentions were clearly stated but rescue was calculated to be about 30 hours away. Thirty hours of cold wet.

The air was clear and fresh.

The trio found a spot out of drafts and cuddled up for the slow long hours.

Several trips to the bottom of the rope were made just to confirm that, yes in fact they were stuck.

Pulling the rope down earlier on in the trip made sure of that.

Many stories were told as they shared body heat. The use of the carbide flame that each caver had, placed underneath the emergency space blanket kept the shivering to a minimum.

They rationed the food although there was enough to last. Drinking water was kept to a minimum, as getting the wetsuits off was a major task.

They had arrived at Smorge's Hall at 11.50pm Saturday night, about 13.5 hours caving since left behind them. Yes they were on target for a great trip. The preparation had paid off until now.

The three wondered who would do such a thing. Most of the caving community knew of this trip, it had been only done once before and requires many people to help as support. Many theories were bandied.

As the three huddled together and the cold started to take it's evil effect, the shivering started, and was to continue for about 26 hours until a friendly voice was heard yelling from above the water fall. The three were most appreciative of the help the rescuers gave them as you can imagine.

Slow progress was made up the cave. The effects of cold and wet had taken their toll on the three. Energy levels were low.

The frost was heavy and hard on the windscreens at 5.45am Monday as the three found the out side surface air.

No small advantage was taken in the heated vehicles that waited with hot drinks.

To this day nobody is letting on about the mystery of the coiled rope.

Bruce

Danielle

Andrew

## **NSG Proposed trip list July 2005 to February 2006**

To assist the trip leaders please inform them as early as possible if you are interested in going on the trip. If you have a trip planned and would like others to join you contact the trips co-ordinator (**Oz Patterson Ph 5477395**) Note: Some trips will have limits on numbers and may also require that you have certain skills for the cave.

1 <sup>st</sup> Oct	Club trip – details to follow	Contact trips co-ordinator
13 <sup>th</sup> Oct	<b><u>Club Meeting October</u></b> Note meeting a week earlier due to activities at Labour w/e	Mike and Jane's Ph 5457457
22/24 <sup>th</sup> Oct	NZSS AGM Takaka Hill. Labour W/e	NSG hosting event. Lots of caving!
2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Takaka Hill, Andy's mystery caving trip	Andy Bagley Ph 5457488
29 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Gorge Creek Cave.	Andrew Smith Ph 5481490
17 <sup>th</sup> Nov	<b><u>Club Meeting November</u></b>	Jim Palmer's Ph 5479694
26 <sup>th</sup> /30 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Heli-caving Villa-Maria Area, Mt Arthur prospection and exploration	Oz Ph 5477395
18 <sup>th</sup> Dec	<b>Xmas BBQ</b> at Bronwyns and Kevin's 18 Hanby Park	Ph 5484363
Over new year - Mt Owen Exploration, Bulmer Area		
19 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Honest Lawyer Cave	7.30pm
January onwards Turks Torrent Cave, weather dependent		Andrew Smith Ph 5481490
16 <sup>th</sup> Feb 06	<b><u>Club meeting February</u></b>	Greg and Alisons Ph 5447085
February	Honeycomb Hill Cave, Karamea.	Debbie Cade Ph 5477395
March	Possum Patrol Cave, Western Basin, Mt Arthur. Details to come.	

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**Ed.**

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